

The Phoenix Mission Lands on Mars

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Phoenix will land on the arctic plains of Mars on May 25, 2008. The team of the University of Arizona, the Jet propulsion Lab, and Lockheed Martin have spent a considerable effort in orchestrating a robust approach, entry, descent, and landing sequence of events. Contingency maneuvers are planned for every critical event such that the team can respond rapidly with tested procedures to any potential anomaly. Once on the surface, we will evaluate the power levels, communication links, and thermal state to assess the health of the lander and its ability to complete our mission goals. By the time of the conference, panoramic images and the results of the analysis of the first surface samples of soil should be available. In addition, the weather patterns will be monitored during the active summer season. The mission will continue for several months while we dig down to the ice boundary and sample both ice and soil to understand the mineralogy, chemistry, and the potential for habitability of this unexplored region of Mars.